

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/027,843

Examiner

Amanda L. Lauritzen

Applicant(s)

DESILETS ET AL.

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 2 May 2007.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-19, 21, 22 and 24-31.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

Eleonora Miller
SPE 3768

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Thomas Kocovsky on 29 May 2007.

The application has been amended as follows:

Please replace claim 10 as follows:

10. A medical imaging apparatus, including:
a first medical imaging device having a housing which defines a first bore;
a second medical imaging device having a housing which defines a second bore;
a patient support structure which supports a subject patient during imaging; and
a support structure for securing the first and second bores in a fixed abutting relationship, which support structure forms a patient access area between the first and second imaging devices, a part of the support structure defining a fluid control surface formed by the housing of either the first or second medical imaging device and positioned beneath the patient support structure and between the first and second imaging devices for directing liquids falling onto the surface from the vicinity of the patient support structure away from the subject patient.

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Please replace claim 11 as follows:

11. A medical imaging apparatus, comprising:

a housing having a first scanner and a second scanner, each scanner having a bore for obtaining tomographic imaging information from at least a portion of a patient, which housing positions each of the first and second scanner bores in fixed positions apart from the other during scanning operations and forms a patient access area between the first and second scanners bores to allow direct access by a caregiver to the patient extending through the first scanner bore and at least partially positioned between the first and second scanners; and

a substantially continuous arcuate drainage surface which is formed from a portion of said housing in an axial direction, which arcuate drainage surface has a peak located underneath the patient and extends outwardly and downwardly from the peak and toward lateral sides of the housing.

Please replace claim 17 as follows:

17. A medical imaging method, comprising:

providing a housing having a first scanner and a second scanner, each scanner having a bore for obtaining tomographic imaging information from at least a portion of a patient;

positioning each of the first and second scanner bores in fixed positions apart from the other during scanning operations;

forming a patient access area in said housing between the first and second scanners bores to allow direct access by a caregiver to a patient extending through the first scanner bore and at least partially positioned between the first and second scanners to allow direct access to the

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patient by a caregiver through the patient access area formed between the first and second scanners; and

draining fluids from a lower end of the patient access area defined by the housing with an arced surface underneath the patient.

Reasons for Allowance

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

1. The prior art does not teach or suggest a medical imaging apparatus comprising a CT imaging device having a first housing which defines a bore, and a nuclear camera imaging device having a second housing which defines a bore, the first and second housings being selectably securable in a fixed abutting position to one another, and when the first and second housings are secured in a fixed abutting position to one another, the bores of the CT and nuclear camera imaging devices are spaced apart by a distance sufficient to allow direct access by a caregiver, in combination with the other features as presented in claim 1.
2. The prior art does not teach or suggest an imaging apparatus having separatable first and second imaging devices and projecting engageable securement structures to fixedly attach the first and second imaging devices in positions abutting each other and fixed with an opening formed when the first and second housings are abutting, in combination with the other features as presented in claim 2.
3. The prior art does not teach or suggest an imaging apparatus having an imaging device support structure for securing first and second imaging devices in a fixed abutting relationship, the support structure forming a patient access area between first and second imaging devices, and

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having an arcuate drainage surface which is formed as a portion of a housing of either the first or second imaging devices (as distinguished from the patient table, bed or other patient-supporting structure) underneath the patient support structure when the imaging devices are secured together, in combination with the other limitations as presented in claim 3.

4. The prior art does not teach or suggest a medical imaging apparatus including a first imaging device having a housing which defines a bore, and a second imaging device having a housing which defines a bore, with support structure for securing the first and second bores in a fixed abutting relationship, and support structure forming a patient access area between the first and second imaging devices, a part of the support structure defining a fluid control surface formed by the housing of either the first or second medical imaging device, in combination with the other features as presented in claim 10. The prior art teaches drainage and fluid control surfaces incorporated with the patient table or bed but does not teach or suggest a fluid control surface actually formed by the housing of an imager.

5. The prior art does not teach or suggest a medical imaging apparatus comprising a substantially continuous arcuate drainage surface that is formed as a portion of the housing, in combination with the other features as presented in claim 11. The prior art teaches drainage surface(s) as part of a patient table or bed but does not teach or suggest drainage surfaces actually formed by the housing of an imager.

6. The prior art does not teach or suggest a medical imaging method comprising draining fluids from a lower end of the patient access area defined by the housing with an arced surface underneath the patient, in combination with the other features as presented in claim 17.

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7. The prior art does not teach or suggest a medical imaging apparatus having a housing which houses a scanning device and defines a drainage surface disposed below at least a portion of a patient support surface, in combination with the other features recited in claim 22.

8. The prior art does not teach or suggest a medical imaging apparatus comprising first and second imaging devices, wherein the imaging device housings are selectably securable in a fixed abutting position to one another, that when they are secured in a fixed abutting position to one another, the first and second imaging regions are spaced apart by a distance sufficient to allow access to the subject patient, in combination with the other limitations as presented in claim 30.

Conclusion


Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should clearly be labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Amanda L. Lauritzen whose telephone number is (571) 272-4303. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday, 8:30am - 5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Brian L. Casler can be reached on (571) 272-4956. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


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5/29/2007